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SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS USAID/DCHA/OTI RWAX

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: COMPLEX EMERGENCY AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE FOR SRI LANKA

1. SUMMARY. AFTER TWO DECADES OF WAR THAT HAVE SHORT-CIRCUITED DEVELOPMENT AND TORN APART THE NATION'S SOCIAL FABRIC, SRI LANKA NOW FINDS ITSELF WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE PEACE. IN ORDER FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS HISTORIC WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT THE PEACE PROCESS THE AMBASSADOR HAS DETERMINED THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SRI LANKA MERITS THE CONTINUED USE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES (TI) FUNDS AND HAS REQUESTED THAT USAID'S OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES (OTI) CONTINUE A PROGRAM THROUGH SRI LANKA'S KEY TRANSITION PERIOD. END SUMMARY

2. USAID/OTI'S GOAL IN SRI LANKA SINCE MARCH 2003 HAS BEEN TO GENERATE GREATER SUPPORT FOR A NEGOTIATED PEACE SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA AND THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM. USAID/OTI IS SUPPORTING A PROGRAM TO DEMONSTRATE TANGIBLE BENEFITS OF PEACE, TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND DIVERSE POINTS OF VIEW ON PEACE RELATED ISSUES AMONG VARIOUS LEVELS OF SOCIETY AND VARIOUS COMMUNITIES, AND TO REDUCE OR PREVENT THE INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT PRONE COMMUNITIES. USAID/OTI'S ASSISTANCE IS BEING PROVIDED TO UNDERPIN THE LARGER U.S. GOVERNMENT GOAL TO SUPPORT FOR THE PEACE PROCESS IN SRI LANKA.

3. THERE IS A CONTINUING NEED FOR THIS TYPE OF SUPPORT DURING FY04, A CRITICAL PERIOD FOR SRI LANKA AS IT WORKS ON A PEACE AGREEMENT AND A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. THE PEACE PROCESS IN SRI LANKA IS TENUOUS. THE USAID/OTI PROGRAM IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT WILL INCREASE THE PUBLIC'S SUPPORT FOR THIS PROCESS.

4. RATIONALE FOR CONTINUED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE. AS A TRANSITIONAL PRIORITY, THE STABILITY OF SRI LANKA IS PARAMOUNT. A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA WOULD ENCOURAGE A SIMILAR APPROACH TO BE USED THROUGHOUT THE REGION. USAID/OTI'S CONTINUED ASSISTANCE WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING VALUE-ADDED COMPONENTS TO MISSION PROGRAMMING:

- USAID/OTI ALLOWS THE MISSION TO DEMONSTRATE VISIBLE PEACE DIVIDENDS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, THEREBY PERSUADING SKEPTICS TO LEND THEIR SUPPORT TO THE PEACE PROCESS.
- THE USAID/OTI PROGRAM, IN PART THROUGH ITS CONTRACTOR'S FIELD OFFICES, IS ABLE TO WORK IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, WITH MANY PROJECTS IN COMMUNITIES THAT ARE MULTI-ETHNIC.
- USAID/OTI IS ABLE TO HAVE PROJECTS FULLY IMPLEMENTED WITHIN A FEW MONTHS TIME. THIS FAST AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING ALLOWS USAID/OTI TO TAILOR AND ADAPT ITS PROGRAM TO THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, ATTITUDES AND HAPPENINGS DURING THE PEACE PROCESS.

5. THE USAID MISSION IN SRI LANKA AND THE US EMBASSY WELCOME AND SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE.

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